

i'll stay up for you

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

“You’re so demanding,” Dream rolls his eyes, but digs around his mind anyways.
George pokes at his arm. “Not my fault you thought of the most boring fact ever.”
“Shut up,” he prods back. “I’m thinking.”
“First time for everything,” George replies, and Dream kind of wants to hit him in the mouth. With his own mouth. Gently.

(A series of 4 a.m.'s together, and a plus one.)

Notes

disclaimer: if anyone in this fic expresses any discomfort to being in it, i will gladly delete this and also myself

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happy reading!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

4:10 a.m.

Dream can't sleep.

Ironic, considering his name, and he'd crack some sort of joke, but he's too tired to do so. He hasn't been able to sleep in the last hour; shortly after finishing his disregarded essay for an English class,

he hadn't hesitated to immediately collapse into his bed. Unfortunately, his tries at falling asleep are fruitless, and he is so close to simply turning over and jumping out the window. Crash-landing into the pavement from several feet up has never looked so appealing.

He heaves in a breath as he rolls over in his bed, the duvet nearly falling off the side when he makes no attempt to pull it back over, too busy trying not to die in the summer heat. The fan whirring softly to his right offers almost no proper cooling, but he has no effort to try and fix it. His shirt bunches uncomfortably around his waist, his skin is somewhat sticky to the touch, and the right leg of his sweatpants is just a bit higher than the left one. Dream is just a little uncomfortable about everything.

The glowing alarm clock next to him slowly clicks to a shining 4:11 A.M. when a timid knock at the door has him squint in the darkness. There was only one other person who was dumb enough to be awake right now.

"Come in," he calls, the first word barely out of his mouth when the door swings open. The moon, shining through the open window, offers what little light it could to outline the figure at the doorway, where his roommate stands, laptop in hand.

"Lovely evening we are having," George greets like the weird British man he is, and any reluctance that the knock had suggested was gone when he walks over, nudging Dream to the side as he makes his own space in the bed.

Dream doesn't bother protesting and silently scoots over, suddenly much more awake than he was a few moments ago. It was not common that George invaded his room at odd hours of the night, more likely to opt for sending him subliminal text messages until Dream lets up and knocks on his door. "Why're you here?"

"Couldn't sleep," George shrugs, leaning over for Dream's laptop charger, and nearly falling off the bed in the process. Dream tugs him back on the bed when it becomes apparent that he is still sliding over the edge. "I want to watch Madagascar together. The movie," he specifies unnecessarily, "not the country."

This elicits a light groan from Dream, who rolls over, shoving his face into his pillows. "At four in the morning?" He's complaining, but he appreciates the unexpected company anyways. He appreciates anything to do with George, because he was a loser like that.

"Tomorrow is a Saturday, and I know you have nothing planned, you loner," the other tells him, somehow managing to bring up exactly how sad Dream's social life was at the moment. It wasn't *his* fault he has enough friends to count on one hand, and if one of them was his mom, it wasn't *that* embarrassing. Maybe a little embarrassing.

"Why now?" He complains, ignoring the weird grip of something warm in his chest when George sits next to Dream, bodies almost melting together at the lack of space between them. George is often like a cat in his own way, where he takes ownership of any space at all without a care, and George at four a.m. was even worse when he suddenly leaves behind any regards to normal, social behavior.

This is apparent when he does not answer, instead turning on his unnaturally bright laptop, and, consequently, nearly burning off Dream's sight while he blinks away the pain. He types in his password quickly, chewing on his lower lip as he navigates Netflix, quietly humming some sort of song that sounded too alike to something he'd heard Quackity make up. They were spending too much time together for Dream's liking. He wonders if it would be ridiculous to permanently ban Quackity from their home.

George's thigh is warm against Dream's when they press together, arm and waist bumping as George scrolls. Dream attempts to sit up straight after suffocating in his own pillows, and his head slightly leans against George's shoulder. It's nice.

"I," Dream squints, as if to make sure he was seeing this right, "is that my hoodie?"

"Free real estate," George replies, not quite answering his question, yet something flutters in Dream's chest at the thought of the other wearing his clothing.

It's not like it was an uncommon thing; more often than not, George would trail into the kitchen in early mornings, wearing pants slightly too big at the waist, or shirts that had been a little too big around the shoulders and collar. It was not unexpected, yet it makes Dream's face warm all the same. Sometimes it was lucky that George was as clueless as he was.

"You just steal whatever you get your hands on," Dream huffs, faux annoyance present in his voice, but George seems to know it's only ever fake when he lets out a small laugh, pressing play on the movie. His hand lingers on the edge of the laptop. Dream holds back the incredibly scandalous urge to hold his hand.

"Your fault for letting me get ahold of your laundry." George's head rests against the bed's headboard, and they are quite close in fashion. Dream can smell George's shampoo - the one he was insistent on getting every time, which was way overpriced, but seemed to be worth it for how good it smells on George. "Now shut up, the movie is going."

The movie may be going, but so is Dream's heart, with how pretty George looks in the light of his laptop; his features, delicate and sharp in their own way, are much more enrapturing than whatever DreamWorks had come up with. His eyes are slightly shining, too, a slight blush on his cheek as he stares at the screen. Dream's heart skips a beat.

"Dream, I am not the movie," George says factually, and Dream would be much more embarrassed if not for the fact that George himself was blushing, pink crawling up his neck and to his cheeks. He looks good. He always looks good. Dream wants to scream.

He relents, however, and lets his eyes fall to the laptop screen, where the animated animals talk amongst themselves. "This is the second Madagascar movie."

A pause. "So?"

"It's been ten years since I've seen the first one. I have no idea who these characters are," Dream points out, and George yawns.

"I'll explain it to you as it goes," he settles, and begins his lecture about a movie that came out more than a decade ago.

And Dream, being the lovesick idiot he is, hangs onto every word.

4:20 a.m.

"Blaze it," Dream says, and gets hit by a fistful of grass.

It's a Thursday night when they're both in an empty park, a night sky hanging over them, and it isn't too weird for them to be doing this together, being one of the many advantages of living with his best friend.

Some of these advantages consisted of having similar tastes in everything, the lack of argument when it comes to movies or what they would have for dinner. It also offers late mornings, where simply existing together is enough, or even later nights, when a search for company is easily answered.

There were, of course, disadvantages as well, such as the tripling craving in Dream's heart when George asks if he wants to go to the local park, although it was nearing four a.m. when he had suggested it. If it were anyone else, Dream would have probably looked at them weird and retreated to bed, but George has never been anyone else.

It would take no genius to know he was more than head-over-heels for his roommate. Anyone could tell, with how he finds a way to mention the other man in any conversation, when he hurries to answer George's beckoning, the way Sapnap mercilessly teases him for the fact that Dream would probably give up his left lung for him if he asks.

This knowledge, of course, is better off unknown to George, who is the most oblivious person around, and would probably ask for his left lung, just to see if Dream would do it.

(He would.)

As they had left the apartment, Dream had joked about star gazing, chest warming at the thought, but they end up doing just that, where they're both staring up into the vast blanket of space above them.

It was more than a little cliché in several ways - laying in the grass, hands between them, Dream's fingers itching to hold George's hand in his, instead deciding to raise it and point at a cluster of stars before he does something that he would regret, like entwine their fingers and never let go.

"That's Cepheus," he tells George, as if it means anything to either of them. George makes an acknowledging noise next to him.

"I've no idea who that is." His bluntness is acquainted with a tad bit of tiredness from a day full of classes, and Dream has half a heart to suggest going back home. "What's his deal?"

Dream presses his lips together. "No idea."

An unexpected laugh finds its way out of George, whose shoulder barely presses against his. Dream tries so hard to stop thinking about it, about wrapping his arm around George, tangling their fingers and pressing him closer.

Instead, he folds his hands together and places them on his stomach, lest he accidentally give in. It is so often that he simply aches to hold George, who tosses his heart from one hand to the other, unknowing. It's kind of ridiculous, the power he holds over Dream without knowing about it at all.

"I don't know any constellations," George confesses, a hand creeping up to swish his hair to the side. It's getting much longer, often falling across his forehead and into his eyes. Dream likes it more than he'd admit. Sometimes Dream is glad George couldn't read minds.

"I had this childhood phase of being obsessed with space," he shares. "Now I just know an absurd amount of space facts."

"Yeah?" George slowly draws up to a sitting position, and Dream follows. The grass underneath them brushes against his ankles, elbows, and Dream wants to lean over and place his head on George's shoulder like a crazy person.

“Yeah,” he replies, in sake of not having anything else to say. George is getting sleepier, undoubtedly, with how his eyelids keep falling down, as though they held the weight of the world each time he blinks them open. Dream finds a silver lining in his friend’s exhaustion, however, his closed eyes offering more opportunity to stare at him openly. He feels like a creep, and forces himself to look away, before glancing at him again.

The moon, ghostly in her own manner, traces George gently, astonishing in how he seems so effortlessly beautiful. Dream knows that if he was an artist of sorts, he would spend hours trying to capture how easily George took his breath away. It was no surprise, him falling in love with George, when he looks like this all the time.

Simp, a voice that sounds like Sappho supplies. Dream mentally flips the voice off. He wonders if he’s going insane.

“Tell me a space fact?” George more demands than asks, because he was bossy like that. He slowly inhales when he opens his eyes again, turning to look at Dream, who quickly glances up at the sky again. Embarrassment at being caught crawls up his cheeks. He’s glad the moonlight washes away his blush.

If Dream were any braver, he would say something romantic, something intelligent and thought-provoking, somehow cheesy and maybe make George flustered and red. He could think of so many opportunistic pick-up lines, use his English major and think of a good metaphor, something along the gist of how George is the only star that only ever seemed to matter.

“The sun’s temperature is twenty-seven million degrees,” Dream provides, because he was not any braver.

It’s the hottest thing in the universe, but you make my heart set a warmer flame, his mind fills in. Dream wishes he could shut himself up.

“Boring,” George sings, a slight pout on his lips when he is still looking at Dream, who wants to kiss it away almost immediately. “Think of something cooler.”

“You’re so demanding,” Dream rolls his eyes, but digs around his mind anyways.

George pokes at his arm. “Not my fault you thought of the most boring fact ever.”

“Shut up,” he prods back. “I’m thinking.”

“First time for everything,” George replies, and Dream kind of wants to hit him in the mouth. With his own mouth. Gently.

“If you put two pieces of the same type of metal together,” he recites instead, thinking back to his old collection of books about space, “they meld together. Because the atoms of the individual pieces can’t tell where they begin and end, they kind of just,” he puts his fingers together, “melt into each other and become one.”

Not too unlike Dream to George, where he can’t tell how much of him is George anymore. He is George when he brushes his hair away from his forehead, when he pours in his sugars before his cream, where he hesitates to kill bugs now, and stares at dying stars millions of miles away with only his roommate on his mind.

It’s like George leeches his vision away from him, until all he sees is George. Dream sees him in the bitter taste of coffee, the color blue, in the spines of his well-read books and in the overplayed songs on his phone. He sees George in everything, and maybe that is because George is

everything.

“Good fact.” George nods, approval on his face as he does so. “I didn’t know that.”

“Didn’t expect you to,” he responds. “I only know about it because of this book I read back in, like, in fourth grade.”

“How,” George mumbles. “I don’t remember what I did just a few minutes ago.”

“They do say memory gets worse with age,” Dream muses. “Expected, at your age. What are you, eighty-six?”

“Do you think you’re funny,” George tells him flatly, lips turning up when Dream leans over in laughter, lungs going through it when he breathes in like a drowning man, because he is nothing short of being one - especially when he looks over and watches George smile back at him. He blames it on the laughter when it has him going breathless.

A warm breeze creeps between them as silent beats pass, laughter receding and quiet contentedness following. He likes the unnecessary of talking, a common thing for them. Words always came easy with George, but it was never needed for comfort.

“Want to head home?” He asks when George yawns for the second time in less than three minutes, rubbing his eyes as he tries to stay awake. It’s cute. George is cute. Grass is green. The sky is blue.

“Soon,” he answers, eyes shining when they look at Dream.

Dream can only stare back and feel a supernova in his chest.

4:30 a.m.

“I didn’t even know we owned baking soda,” Dream mutters as he slowly puts away a bag of sugar, currently in the action of putting away newly bought groceries.

“I often wonder how either of us are alive.” George’s tinny voice rings out from the speakers of Dream’s phone, submerging the lonely apartment.

Although it’s only been three days since George had left to visit family in England for spring break, it feels like weeks, Dream all too accustomed to existing with the other man around. It was alarming to walk into an empty apartment, where he would expect light music playing from behind the shut bedroom door, or see George occupying the couch while complaining about his classes or a new code that he was having trouble with.

Dream keeps looking up to see George sitting across from him at the dinner table, and can’t help the disappointment at the sight of an empty chair. One could blame it on the fact that George was the source of most of his socializing, or the fact he was very much in love with his roommate, but he misses George more than he should.

The rustling sounds of movement bring Dream out of his deeply depressing thoughts. “Isn’t it, like, nine a.m. there? What are you doing?”

A yawn responds to him first, before George replies, “Still in bed. I can hear my family eating breakfast without me because they’ve got, like, proper sleep schedules.”

"Maybe it wouldn't be so screwed up if you tried sleeping before five a.m. like a normal person." He tosses the receipt aside, crumpling up a few wrappers.

George scoffs. "Bold words from a man who just bought groceries at three a.m."

"Shopping in the middle of the night is *nice*," he defends. "Standing in the soup aisle at three a.m. is very calming. There is ambience."

"You sound like a crazy person."

"I'm not crazy," Dream says without much conviction. He picks up a carton of eggs, carefully placing them next to a bag of carrots in the fridge, before making a face. Maybe he *was* crazy. "When did I buy carrots?"

"I bought them before I left because you don't consume vegetables unless they are conveniently placed," George huffs as he moves around, the sound of the microphone rubbing against fabric muffling his voice until it suddenly clears. "Have you eaten anything besides a pound of red meat every day?"

"Of course I have," Dream sniffs. "I had an orange two days ago."

A pause. "You're so stupid."

They both break into soft laughter as Dream makes a protesting noise, and if George were here next to him, he'd probably throw a carrot at him. There's a weird ache in his chest. He wonders how it's possible to be homesick when he's already in his apartment. The possibility of him being insane grows more likely every passing moment.

The rest of their conversation is light, easy as Dream packs away their groceries, makes a quick snack, gets ready for bed while George slowly drags himself out of his, and finally jumps into bed, phone in charge while George explains the many complications of living with eight people and sharing only two bathrooms.

Anything with George is comfortable, effortless to continue conversations and begin them. In the cold emptiness of living alone, even if for a week, George makes him laugh easily, turning in his own bed as he tries to get comfortable.

"When do you come home?" Dream asks, voice slightly drowsy with exhaustion. Long days were not meant to end at four a.m., but he'd stay up for days if it meant spending more time with George. Perhaps he was more than a little whipped.

"Saturday night," George answers, voice softer than it usually is. If he had enough energy, he would probably retain it to memory, or try to ignore the flutter in his chest that it gave him.

He groans. "That's so far away, *no*."

"It's only four days away, Dream," George says, and Dream can hear his smile in his words, so it's only fitting for him to smile back, even if he couldn't see it. "You were nothing like this before we were roommates."

"That's because," he begins, but immediately cuts himself off.

That's because I wasn't in love with you then, he had almost said, but that wouldn't have been true at all. Dream is pretty sure he's been in love since the beginning of time, which wouldn't make sense, as he and George had only met less than ten years ago, but it often feels like Dream had

loved George before anything else.

Sometimes he forgets George doesn't know how he feels. It is so natural to Dream, loving George like he does, and it is often that he has to doubletake at what he almost says. It's ridiculous, the amount of times he's almost confessed without realizing.

It is just as often that he considers telling George everything he bottles up. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad to let him know everything Dream feels, how his heart triples in size every time he looks at him, how he flourishes every time their eyes meet, how Dream is pretty sure he melts every time George laughs at something he says.

How, despite being in his own apartment, Dream was homesick, because home was currently an ocean away.

"Because?" George encourages.

But it would be stupid to, and especially now, when Dream wouldn't be able to see his reaction. He doesn't think George would be disgusted; a little uncomfortable at first, maybe, laughing a little nervously before moving on, but never disgusted. They've been friends for far too long to have something like this ruin their friendship.

"Because I didn't have to live by myself when you're gone, duh," Dream says instead, exhaling when George laughs lightly. "This is so lonely. I have no one to eat dinner with."

"Aw, poor Dream doesn't have anyone to force to clean his dishes anymore," George mockingly coos, and Dream finds himself smiling anyways.

"You're such an idiot."

"You like me anyway," George naturally quips back, unknowing of how truthful the statement was. "I'll call you again soon. Mum wants all of us to go to the park together."

Dream nods, before realizing it was going unseen. "Yeah, sure. Tell her I say hi."

"Okay." There is the creak of a door opening sounding through the speakers, and Dream shoves his face further into his pillow. "Goodnight."

"Goodnight," he echoes back, and closes his eyes when the call disconnects.

4:40 a.m.

Out of the many things he could be doing at the dead of a Saturday night, laundry is not at the top of Dream's list.

George, unfortunately, was great at persuasion (read: pretty privilege), and had roped him into helping him work through his laundry, no more than a few hours after arriving back home, because his inner clock was in disarray and Dream has never had a proper sleeping time. Sometimes he curses his inability to say no to George.

And so, with an entire suitcase full of clothes, in a pink shirt that charmingly states *Live, Laugh, Laryngitis*, George had announced their new plan of the night, declaring, "You're going to help me with the laundry."

And Dream, ever the loser, had taken one look at George's ruffled hair, and had steadily agreed.

So that is how, at four forty-three a.m., they work through a pile of warm clothes, a slowly climbing tower of folded clothes in front of them.

"No, keep it on," Dream lightly complains when George pulls off his shirt, tugging a plain blue shirt on instead. His hair is progressively getting messier - the aftermath of a long flight, no longer caring, as well as sticking his head in his closet as he searched for more clothes to wash. Dream envies his ability to look good no matter what. His hands itch to take a picture.

George raised a singular eyebrow. "You've got a thing for laryngitis?"

Dream chokes as he laughs, slightly pushing onto him, and George is warm. He wants to hold the other man in his arms, and rushes to dismiss the thought. The paranoia of him somehow being a mind reader is always present. "You - *no*, what is wrong with you?" George laughs next to him, and he wants to treasure the sound. "I just think you look good in pink. Pink is your color."

He has absolutely no idea what possessed him to say that, because Dream might be bold, but that was *bold*, and by the flush on his cheeks, George thought the same. "Shut up."

"Make me," he responds cheekily, playfully flirty as he always is.

"I bet you'd like that." George grins when Dream sputters, and continues folding a pair of pants, oblivious to the growing heat in his cheeks.

Maybe I would, he thinks, and diminishes the thought before he accidentally says it out loud. He says anything and everything around George, and it is kind of ridiculous a lot of the time - the other man just simply had a way of eliminating his ability to properly *think*.

There were a lot of abilities George had, if Dream thinks about it.

His ability to naturally make Dream undeniably happy was a given; it was something anyone could notice. In a crowded room, no one made him laugh so easily, nor made him smile or keep him entertained for so long. Sometimes it was unnerving, his knack of simply *knowing* what to say to Dream, how George could simply exist and light up Dream's world.

He also likes George's ability to make anything mundane memorable. So many of his best memories of George are held in domestic settings; making their way through a grocery list together, throwing popcorn at each other during their weekly movie nights, sitting together at their dinner table, and doing laundry together. Together - they already did so much together.

Maybe Dream was selfish for wanting more, for wanting them to *be* together. Maybe all Dream ever is, is selfish, wanting so much all the time while all George does is give.

George tosses a red sock at his face. "How did your socks get into my laundry? Why do you have Danny DeVito socks?" He asks, looking not all that surprised.

"Why don't you have Danny DeVito socks," Dream challenges, picking up his sock and placing it into a growing pile of his own laundry. He tries not to think about how much of his own clothing had been in George's closet.

"Because I'm a sensible adult who knows what to do with my money." They both look at each other, and ultimately decide not to mention the in-real-life Minecraft diamond armor George had bought less than a week ago over call.

When the laundry is finally done, it's a few minutes before five a.m., where they both resolve to go to bed, George carrying a tall stack of clothes back to his room.

He trails Dream in the hallway as they go to their respective rooms, and not for the first time, Dream is hit with the want to pull George into his own arms, waddle them over to his bed for them to share, if only for one night. They, as friends do, have slept in the same bed plenty of times, although only ever accidental.

Still, Dream wants to tuck him under his chin, hold George close in his own room. He wants to call George *his*, press open-mouthed kisses and call him *mine, mine, mine*. He wants for George to be his, and for him to be George's.

The urge to suddenly confess seems to grow stronger every day, and is even worse after not having seen George for an entire week. Call it the simple happiness of seeing him again after so long, but the words of *I am actually deeply in love with you, can I kiss you please* threaten to spill out of him constantly, and he does not know what to do.

He wants to draw George close, closer than ever.

"Goodnight," George calls when he turns the knob of his own door, already halfway in.

Dream offers a small smile. "Goodnight."

He, instead, closes the door, and simply wants.

4:50 a.m.

"Why do we ever go to these things," George sighs, seeming like he would like to drown himself in his own drink. Dream almost wants to join him.

"Because Karl called us lonely and threatened to take away my PS5 if we didn't show up," Dream says with resigned defeat. Karl can be very convincing when he likes to be, because even though he was the definition of an overexcited puppy, he was capable of being incredibly threatening.

George gives him a look. "Why am *I* suffering at the cost of *your* PS5?"

"Because," Dream explains, "we are a package deal."

A long pause follows, and he's almost scared he said something out of line, until George says, "I want a divorce." If he almost inhales his drink at that, it is nobody's business but his own.

"Please, George, think of the kids," he jokes, meeting George's dead stare.

"I want to go *home*."

They have collectively spent the last few hours being forced to socialize, where, although he was quite social, Dream was introverted enough to prefer staying home over whatever *this* was.

This, of course, being a party at someone's frat, where there were more drunk college kids than one would like to see on a Wednesday night, and the fact that neither of them were partygoers did not make this any more enjoyable.

The beat of some sort of Ed Sheeran song shakes the entire house, heart thumping along, and Dream thinks that if he hears this song ever again, he might just decide to perish. The crowd of

overly loud frat boys, who sing along passionately, were not helping, as they fail to try and serenade a neighboring group of girls, who look thoroughly unimpressed. Dream heavily relates.

He was glad he had George, though. Any situation was better with him.

It was nearing three a.m. now, with the party still going strong, despite classes being open less than a few hours away. It was lucky that he didn't have any classes until late into the afternoon, and George had no classes at all until Friday, when he would inevitably come home and complain about the same professor, as he usually did. Dream never minded.

"Karl just texted me," George tells him when his phone dings. "Him, Sap, and Quackity left to buy," he pauses, squinting as he reads aloud, "pool noodles?" He looks up, matching quizzical expressions when he meets Dream's eyes.

Dream makes a considering noise. "Quackity did mention wanting to create the longest pool noodle a few days ago, and Sapnap is -"

He freezes. The abrupt cut off has George turning to him. "What?"

He thinks. "Wait."

George, looking amused, answers, "I'm waiting."

"Karl isn't here anymore," Dream begins.

George nods. "He ditched us."

"So," he puts together, "we have no reason to be here anymore."

A smile creeps up. "Apparently."

There is a beat of silence as they both look at each other, before immediately heading towards the closest exit, Dream using the excuse of not wanting to lose George in the crowd to hold his hand. Their hands are warm together, hanging between them as they walk. He forces himself to drop them when they step outside, a warm breeze walking by, and Dream's insides feel cold.

The muffled beat of music follows them outside, but it's still quieter than the discord inside, where excited cheering can be heard every few moments. There are a few couples sitting around the front lawn, and some part of Dream wishes he and George had joined them earlier.

"Are you hungry?" Dream asks as they walk over to his car, George tossing him the keys. They haven't had anything to eat for the past few hours, too busy being tossed from one drinking game to another while also narrowly avoiding drinking at all. Last time he had checked, Quackity had gotten fully wasted. Dream prays for whatever poor store the trio was currently occupying.

George chews on his lower lip. "Now that you mention it," he admits, "I'm kind of craving something sweet." He buckles in, and pulls out his phone. "It's almost five a.m."

Dream turns his key, and looks over. "Milkshakes?"

George grins. "Please."

It's barely a few minutes later when they sit atop the hood of the car, occupying an abandoned diner's parking lot while they sip on their respective milkshakes. Dream had gotten a vanilla one,

being that it's the superior flavor, while George sits next to him, strawberry flavored in his left hand.

The coolness of the milkshakes compliment the warm, summery night, and Dream, not for the first time, wishes he could remember this forever - the muffled warmth of George's thigh is pressed against his own, elbows knocking from time to time.

He wants to draw George closer.

He vouches to fill the hole in his heart with more vanilla.

"You've got a class tomorrow, don't you?" George asks him, switching his cup from his left to his right, swiping the condensation onto his pants as he makes a face.

Dream nods, before sighing. "Civics. Everyday is a burden."

A flower of satisfaction blooms in his chest when George snorts. "Should've been a theatre major, with how dramatic you are," he says, the corner of his lips quirked upward. Dream wants to kiss it.

"You like my dramatics," he grins, taking a glance at the other man. He looks good in the moonlight. Dream's thoughts are only ever a symphony of praises for George.

"Who is lying to you," George dryly states, oblivious.

Dream takes a long sip of his milkshake, placing the empty cup beside him. Contentedness fills his stomach like a flood, and he'd like to drown in it. Still, they have lives, and it would be unreasonable to spend any more time than they've already spent, alone in an empty parking lot.

A few more minutes pass in each other's silent company, until George finishes his own milkshake, slightly leaning against Dream's arm. He tries not thinking about it. It doesn't work.

He despises himself when he finally asks, after it becomes apparent of both of them growing tired, "Do you want to head home?"

George shrugs, his shoulder rubbing against Dream's. "I suppose so."

"Okay," he replies, already dreading having to depart already, despite having spent almost all day with him.

He hops off his car, slightly stumbling when he turns to face George, mouth already open to say something else, when he sucks in a breath, alarmed by how much closer George was than expected.

Less than a few inches away, illuminated by the blues and reds of the neon-lit sign of the diner, George looks - enticing, alluring in every way. Less than a few inches away, Dream could pull him in closer, wrap an arm around his waist and kiss him dramatically, like in the movies. He could hold him close, and never let go. Less than a few inches away, but always just a little too far to touch.

Dream blames it on cruel optimism when he swears he sees George's dark eyes glance at his own lips, before immediately darting up to meet his eyes. Tantalus, Dream is in his own way, where he seems to only ache for George, receding away when he reaches out, as it would be too good, too unreal for him to lean into a kiss.

His own feelings are ridiculous; falling in love with his best friend was as cliché as it could get yet,

and with George being himself, Dream would be selfish to dare to consider kissing him.

He abruptly clears his throat, swerving to grab his empty cup as he unlocks the car. He avoids George's eyes as he opens the door to the driver's seat, the night air suddenly so much colder.

"Let's go home," he settles, unnoticing as George still stands, frozen.

5:00 a.m.

It's, oddly enough, another Wednesday night when George corners him.

The past week had been an awkward tango of silence, where Dream had spent trying to ignore the sudden surge of emphasized feelings every time their fingers brushed, when his eyes landed on George, when they sat together, when they existed together. It was getting to be too much, at times, to not be able to kiss the other senseless and call George *his*.

It would only be sensible, then, to simply pull back. With a bleeding heart like his, it would only make sense to stray away from what makes it ache like it does, and if that means a few silent dinners, a loss of company, and a few awkward conversations, then so be it.

Maybe his actions could be considered cowardly, and maybe that was true; with catching bugs and with the dark, he can cope with pretty easily, but God, did the thought of confessing the storm that George conjured up in his heart scare him terribly.

So, it seemed logical, at the time, to begin detaching from George for the sake of not ruining whatever wonderful thing they had.

He thought he was doing pretty well at hiding his attempts of settling his own heart, but maybe George had caught on pretty quickly when Dream began pulling away during movie nights, or leaning to let in space when George offered to read through his paragraphs.

Right now was as obvious as he could be, having avoided dinner for the sake of not facing George, and he had pretended to be asleep when the other had knocked on his door, peering in and sighing at the sight of Dream hurriedly huddled under his covers. He had waited a full minute for him to leave, holding his breath until he heard the *click* of George's door shutting.

Dream now stood, frozen in the kitchen as he faced his roommate, caught at five a.m. in the morning.

George has always been smart, bright and quick-witted, so it would be no surprise to anyone, least of all *Dream*, who knows him like the back of his hand, that he figures it out pretty quickly.

"You're ignoring me," he says, and it's not a question.

Dream tries to swallow down the sudden rock that has decided to reside in his throat. "I'm not," he answers, and it's the clearest lie he's ever uttered.

George raises an eyebrow, arms crossed. He looks - not well, dark shadows under his eyes, and bottom lip bitten red. Guilt swirls in his stomach at the sight.

"You clearly are," he tells him. "We haven't talked in, what, four days? And we *live* together."

Dream winces. "I know, I was just - busy, I guess."

George looks unimpressed. "Busy," he states, unbelieving.

"I," he flushes dark. "Yeah."

"You're not being very convincing." Something hot and unwelcome crawls up his neck, with the way George looks at him at the moment; unwavering, somewhat angry, somewhat sad. He doesn't know what to say.

Anything, however, would be better than the unfortunately-timed confession threatening to spill out of his mouth, and in place of it, he says, "I'm sorry."

George's eyebrows furrow. "Sorry?"

"Yeah." He averts his gaze, rubbing the nape of his neck awkwardly. "I'm sorry for ignoring you."

Silence follows as he stares at the floor, avoiding George's eyes, who seem to strip him down of all barriers. He's only truthful with George, even bluffs and white lies revealed to be what they are when he tries to pass them off, so this -

"Did I do something?"

Dream freezes. "What?"

"Did I do something?" George repeats, and he looks tired, all of a sudden. "What did I do wrong?"

Cold dread drips to the bottom of his stomach as Dream quickly shakes his head. "*No*, no, you didn't - you've never," he stumbles, hurrying to assure George that he hasn't done anything wrong, and the guilt grows in size. "You didn't do anything."

"Then why are you avoiding me?" He asks, letting his arms fall.

He wants to step closer, so he does. "I just - was being stupid, I don't know. I was dealing with my own stuff. It wasn't - it was nothing you could have possibly done. I'm sorry." Dream bites his inner cheek. "I'm sorry for avoiding you. Forgive me?"

George lets out a puff of breath. "You were always forgiven, idiot."

He cracks a small smile, taking a step closer between them. He is an arm's length away, and there is the ache again, as it always is, haunting him, even when it was five a.m. Dream lets himself be selfish for once when he asks, "Can I hug you?"

George nods, cheeks pink as he shuffles closer. Dream wastes no time to envelope him in his arms, encapsulating him in his arms, tucking the man under his chin as he tries not to melt. He is always wax to George, dripping into nothingness when they grow close.

Although being in their shared apartment the entire time, he has never been so at home until now, George in his arms and him in George's. He kind of never wants to let go.

There is a muffled noise spoken into his chest, and Dream pauses.

"What did you say?"

George stays unmoving for a few seconds, before leaning away, pink in the face when he asks, "Why didn't you kiss me?"

His mouth falls open, warmth flooding his cheeks. "What?"

“At the car,” George continues, “why didn’t you kiss me?”

There were so many reasons, but he finds himself agape, mouth slightly open. “I don’t,” Dream tries to pull away, but George keeps his arms around him, unmoving, “I don’t know.”

He looks at Dream. “I was waiting for you to kiss me. And I was being very obvious about it, too.”

“*How?*” He moves back to look at George properly, befuddlement in his bones. “The most you did was look at me for, like, a millisecond!”

“Well, I’m being obvious about it *now*,” he rolls his eyes, but there’s amusement in them. The lighting of their kitchen isn’t the most flattering, and even with the obvious tiredness of staying up so late, George is still so attractive, as he always is.

Dream, being simply a man, wants to pull him close, and with the new information granted to him, he does so. He snakes his arms around George’s waist, forehead against forehead. “What am I supposed to about that?”

George huffs, leaning closer. “Kiss me, dumbass.”

With a request like that, Dream essentially has no choice but to close the space between them, tilting his head to the side as he gives in, flowers flourishing under his skin as he does so. Kissing in the kitchen at ungodly hours of the night wasn’t the most romantic, but anything with George was movie-worthy, and especially so when he cups George’s face in his hands, warm under his palms.

George holds onto Dream with both his hands, one at his waist, and the other gripping the fabric of his hoodie tightly. He steps as close as he physically can, close enough to press their chests together. If Dream focuses hard enough, he could probably hear George’s heartbeat, if he tries.

“George,” Dream says as the first thing, still a breath away when he pulls away. “George, you have *no* idea how much I wanted to do that.”

George’s lips split into a smile, and Dream wants to kiss him again. “You could’ve done it sooner if you weren’t busy being stupid.”

He looks happy, under the overhead light of their kitchen, eyes wide awake and cheeks red, and Dream commits it to memory for rainy days. His lips are stretched into a grin, and he looks entirely kissable. A red string wraps itself around his heart, and he dearly wants to say one of the million things on his mind.

“You make me stupid,” Dream says, arms still around his waist. “I lose brain cells every time I talk to you.”

George blinks. “I didn’t think you had brain cells.”

“I just kissed you, you don’t get to do this to me,” Dream complains, leaning away. George swats at his shoulder. He thinks he might explode.

“Dream,” George begins.

“George,” Dream says back, grinning when he gets a glare in return.

“Kiss me again or I’m leaving,” he announces, the words barely past his lips when Dream shuts

him up with his own mouth.

It is five a.m. when Dream learns that, sometimes, wanting is worth the trouble.

End Notes

[look at this wonderful art that ari has made](#) !! please give it some love :)

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hello ! something quick and easy before i begin my next multichap :)

i may have forgotten self restraint with all the sappiness, but i like to think dream is pretty sentimental as well

hopefully u liked the playlist i had made along with this ! it is entirely made up of songs i was listening to when i wrote this

as always, feel free to comment, kudos, and u can see me [here](#) or [here!](#)

thank u so much for reading !

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!